surprise visits and inspections have also been reiterated. Checks have also been carried out.

(b) and (c) Use of locally programmable charge-indicator is not permitted. Franchisees are also to display latest tariff charts for the benefit of users. Any violation of these requirements can lead to termination of the franchisees.

Sugar Production

*172. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country's sugar production has fallen by over five per cent to 17.5 million tonnes in the current year;

(b) if so, whether the country produced a record 18.5 million tonnes of sugar in 2000-01, up from 18.2 million in the previous year;

(c) the States where sugar production has fallen;

(d) the main reasons for the same; and

(e) the steps proposed to be considered to improve sugar output in 2002-2003?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) The sugar production during the current season 2001-02 is expected to be around 17.5 million tonnes as against 18.42 million tonnes (Provisional) during the previous season (2000-01), indicating a fall of about 5%.

(b) The sugar production during the seasons 2000-01 was 18.42 million tonnes as against 18.19 million tonnes during the previous season (1999-2000).

(c) and (d) The fall in production of sugar is mainly in the State of Maharashtra. According to the Government of Maharashtra, the

main reasons for the fall in production are unfavourable monsoon conditions and diversification of sugarcane for fodder purposes.

(e) It may be mentioned that the conventional sugar cycle of two years of high production followed by two years of low production has already been broken. Sugar production during the last three seasons as also during the current season has been relatively high. This has resulted in high carry forward stocks with the sugar factories. Sugar output in 2002-03 sugar season will depend, *inter alia*, on weather conditions, plantation of sugarcane, etc.

MoU with HCL Infosys

†*173. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Posts has signed a MoU with HCL Infosys to provide them the network of post offices across the country to market its entire range of computer products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the financial benefits to be generated by the Department of Posts from this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) The Department of Posts and HCL Infosystems have signed MoU with the intention of development and introduction of the following services for mutual benefit:

(i) Usage of Speed Post by HCL at the all India level.

(ii) Booking of orders for HCL products through Post Office network.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi